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ABSTRACT

This document reviews recent data from six predominantly white universities in the tristate area of Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana, which suggests that recruitment and retention of minority students are difficult because (1) there were few minority role models in leadership positions; (2) there were an insufficient number and variety of ethnic studies programs; (3) relevant and appropriate library and media resources were not available; (4) there were few concerted efforts to empower minorities; (5) there was inadequate preparation of faculty, staff, and students to live in a multicultural society; and (6) there were few opportunities to experience the enrichment resulting from a culturally pluralistic community. To remedy these conditions, the document recommends various actions: universities collaborative on ethnic studies programs leading to a major or minor in teacher education programs; analyze library holdings and increase line item in budget for multicultural audiovisual materials; create web pages to attract potential minority employees for leadership positions; provide leadership development training for minorities; insure adequate minority representation on all governing entities; and subsidize and provide supervision of crosscultural experience in residence hall settings. (Contains 32 references.) (BF)

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ED 412 823

EMPOWERING MINORITIES TO IMPACT THE ESTABLISHED CULTURE IN EUROCENTRIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

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About the Authors

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Preamble:

President Bill Clinton has voiced his views on race relations in America. He posed this question recently to graduates of the University of California

> "Can we be one America, respecting, even celebrating our differences, but embracing even more what we have in common? Can we define what it means to be an American, not just in terms of the hyphens showing our ethnic origins, but in terms of our primary allegiance to the values America stands for?"

The President has demonstrated his conviction that we are all important, all equal, all able to make a vital contribution to our society. He has ensured that people of color hold important positions of leadership in his administration.

The researchers, Lorena O'Donnell and Esther Green-Merritt share the conviction of President Clinton and the belief that one of the best ways to become the "truly multicultural democracy" of which he speaks is to ensure that minorities achieve empowerment in institutions of higher learning. The following research document draws data from six predominantly white universities in the Tristate area.

A Look at Minority Recriutment and Retention

HYPOTHESIS:

Successful recruitment and retention of minority students to Eurocentric Universities will occur when the paradigm shifts from focus on the minority individual to focus on the culture of the system.

RATIONALE:

Recruitment and retention of minority students are difficult due to low incidence of

- minority role models in leadership positions
- the number and variety of ethnic studies programs
- relevant and appropriate library and media resources
- concerted efforts to empower minorities to impact the established culture of the institution and to create a new environment
- adequate preparation of the faculty, staff, and students to live in a multicultural society
- opportunities to experience the enrichment resulting from a culturally pluralistic community.

All of these items require a willingness to evaluate the culture of the institution and to share the responsibility for change among the individual minority student and the caretakers of the culture of the institution.

Introduction

Active minority recruitment and retention have been a practice in white institutions of higher education in America since 1980. The focus of such efforts has been to enroll minority students with the expectations of the individual students penetrating an already established institutional culture. The result of this yielded few students enrolled and even fewer students retained. The thesis of this article is predicated upon the hypothesis that the recruitment and retention of minority students will be successful only when the existing paradigm shifts to focus on a systemic change in the culture of the institution. In order for minority students to feel a sense of belonging in a predominately white institution the environment must value, cultivate and sustain the strengths and the contributions of people of color.

Minority Role Models in Leadership Positions at Regional Universities

The Equal Employment Opportunity commission has designated seven employment categories in academia. These rank on the hierarchical ladder from skilled workers on the first rung to executives at the top. In between these two rise the service/maintenance workers, secretarial, professional, faculty and managerial employees.

In every walk of life, humans have needed role models with whom to identify or after whom they can mold their lives. The American Society had been stratified for ages along racial lines with people of color receiving a painful message that their place was at the bottom of the ladder. However, numerous minorities have struggled to eradicate the myth. They have been role models of leadership. When students of color enroll at white institutions of higher learning, they look around for people with whom they can identify. They search for role models in leadership positions.

One metropolitan university in the tristate has a student body of roughly 12,000 who are served by a workforce of 373 faculty and 685 full time staff. The members of the workforce are often referred to as associates. Of this body of 1,031 associates, 62 are employed as leaders. Besides the President and executive Vice President/Provost, there are 60 associates who are at the helm of the Academic, Administrative, and Student Affairs of this institution. This university, as well as other nearby universities have directors of Public Relations and Development, Chairpersons of educational departments and directors of operations like food services and maintenance. The directors of food services and of maintenance are of the majority ethnic culture. In other words, they are white. Governing the associates of the universities are Boards of Regents. Two of the universities have an ethnic minority on their Boards of Regents.

Two other colleges in the area serve 46,500 students. They have a faculty and staff body of 4,006. Of this number, 93% of the associates are white, 7% are people of color. Only 4 positions of leadership are held by people of color here. Four other institutions of higher learning in this region have a work force of 3,521. Their student body is composed of

32,500 majority culture and 1534 minority culture. They have a total of 58 people of color employed and of this number, 10 perform leadership roles. Commendation is probably due to those schools that are actively recruiting minority associates and students. One college in the region has 2,300, of which 132 are minorities. This is an increase in the 1996-97 enrollment of 100 minorities. This college has only 2% faculty and staff of minority ethnicity. None holds a leadership position. Does the foregoing data reveal an equitable representation of leadership? The authors of this document have to conclude that there is a limited number of minority role models at these universities. Without adequate minority role models in leadership positions, students of color tend to experience isolation. Our institutions must take greater strides in bonding minorities into the culture of the universities.

Successful recruitment and retention of minority students at these institutions demand a paradigm shift from business as usual to a proactive approach of changing systems. The latest statistics from The National Multicultural Institute (an internet website) indicate that:

1. In year 2000, 87% of the workforce will be people of color, women and immigrants.
2. Mental and physical disabled will be over 57 million.
3. By the year 2010, English will be the second language in California

The absence of a significant number of minority role models in leadership positions at these universities prevents these institutions from shouldering a major responsibility. As agents of change, it is incumbent on these schools to prepare all faculty, staff and students to work and live in a society that is becoming more and more diverse. Universities must engender and nurture the attitudes and skills needed for multicultural existence.

The Number and Variety of Ethnic Studies Programs

The United States of America, a microcosm of the world, is a multicultural society. Its inhabitants need to be prepared to experience diversity in class, beliefs, abilities, gender and ethnicity.

It is true that ethnic differences have the potential to create and perpetuate the greatest misunderstanding and intolerance. So for institutions of higher learning it is imperative that multicultural education be embedded in the curriculum. Banks (1991) speaks of empowering students. He says they need...

> "The transformative curriculum must help students to reconceptualize and rethink the experience of humans in both the United States and the world, to view the human experience from the perspectives of a range of cultural, ethnic, and social class groups, and to construct their own versions of the past, present, and future."

At four of the institutions in focus, a university student who is interested in ethnic studies can choose among fifteen programs. Anthropology offers twenty courses, Art offers eight, and English ten. There are eighteen history courses from which to choose. There are ten music courses, six social work, seven political science, and ten sociology courses. No ethnic studies program is complete without women's studies. One university offers four courses in this area. Three offer two courses, two offer none.

A few of these universities are large metropolitan institutions. The students, faculty, and staff share the universal need to be cross culturally competent. It is questionable whether acquisition or development of this competence can significantly be aided by the ethnic studies programs at these eurocentric schools. Two hundred sixty nine courses is insufficient. Apart from the sparse number, the variety of ethnic studies courses is marked by its absence. Bear in mind that many of the courses in the universities are similar.

An overview of some of the offerings in the ethnic studies programs sounds the alarm.

Offerings from the Anthropology departments include:
Modern American Indians

The purpose of this course is to use a thematic approach to review the recent history and contemporary situation of Native American peoples in the United States and Canada. This course will deal with white/red and

black/red ethnic relations, Canadian and U.S. government policies toward Indians, treaty rights, social problems, adaptive strategies, and other topics that have a broad application to many Indian peoples.

Peoples of Africa

The purpose of this course is to give the students a general understanding of the continent, the peoples, and the cultures of sub-Saharan Africa. The basic elements of geography, prehistory, and history, as well as a survey of some of the recent and contemporary cultures will be covered. Also, several cultures will be looked at in detail. The goal is to help the student develop a familiarity with Africa's past, understanding its present, and an enlightened concern for its future. This course attempts to point out that people have values, ideas, and lifeways that are sometimes different from our own.

East Asia

This course will provide a cultural and historical overview of East Asia. Students will examine what gave the region the characteristics it has today and ask what ties the great diversity of the region together. Students will explore how ancient philosophical and religious traditions, such as Confucianism and Buddhism, have been reinterpreted in each of the region's nations and consider the impacts of Western and Japanese colonialism on the region.

Some English departments offer:

African-American Literature.

This course does appear to address multiculturalism in that it will look not only at the primary works of African-American writers but secondary materials as well. This course will explore how this writing was influenced by a wide range of aesthetic, philosophical, and sociological factors, not the least of which is its rich folk tradition and what W.E.B. Dubois called the "double-consciousness" of the African-American experience in America.

Women's Autobiography

While this course does address how women's life stories are influenced by historical and cultural influences, one questions whether it is a true multicultural course.

Appalachian Literature

Regional literature including selected works by such major writers of the region as Harriette Arnow, Jesse Stuart, and Wilma Dykeman. This course appears to raise the level of awareness of the contributions of a minority group.

Sociology offerings include:

World Patterns of Race and Ethnicity

This course bears much similarity to courses on Race and Ethnic Relations and attempts to develop an understanding of the racial/ethnic diversity in the United States, historically and at the present. It also develops an understanding of the relationship between personal biography and one's place in the racial/ethnic hierarchy. It provides factual information and theoretical insights that will help students understand and objectively analyze patterns of race/ethnic relations in the United States.

History offerings include:

The Age of Jim Crow, 1880-1930

This course focuses on the causes, progression, completion and perfection of the color caste system popularly know as Jim Crow during the late nineteenth and early twentienth centuries. The course examines the national and Southern milieu in which Jim Crow was born and justified, as well as the impact of the system on the black community according to class and socio-economic status.

Ethnohistory of the Native American Southeast

This course employs the methodology of ethnohistory, which asks ethnographic questions of historical evidence, to study Native peoples of the Southeastern U.S. from prehistoric times to the present.

There is an unfortunate lack in the number and variety of ethnic studies offerings at these institutions. This limitation will adversely affect the ability of these schools to attract and retain people of color. All people need to perceive that minorities are an integral part of the university family. Having a rich variety of ethnic studies programs is one way of sending the message.

The Relevance and Appropriateness of Library/Media Resources

There are many criteria by which an educational institution is judged. Among these is the status of the library. Potential scholars, their parents and well wishers in the community are known to ask what is the size of your library? How many holdings are owned by your institution?

Most of the libraries at these schools are beautiful modern facilities. They boast state of the art technology of which one can be proud. Commendable efforts have been made to procure books that address the disciplines that are important on these campuses. This is a Herculean task. However, it is recognized that students – both undergraduate and graduate need library materials to help them investigate and create. The 7 main campus libraries and 4 Learning Resource Centers have 1,454,320 books. They have 7770 Periodical subscriptions.

Among the 6344 course offerings at these universities are 100 which comprise the ethnic studies programs. The areas of focus include Anthropology, Art, English, History, Political Science, and Social Work. Some of the Teacher Education departments also affer a course on Racism and Sexism in Educational Institutions. Some of the courses in the areas named do address the issues of multiculturalism. Some of them trace the history of issues faced then and now. Others look at women's life stories, while one examines ethnic relations. One may say that on most campuses the need for multicultural education is recognized.

It is natural to expect that faculty are going to require students enrolled in their courses to make scholarly presentations. (oral or written.) These presentations must cite current relevant sources used as documentation. In the educational arena E.R.I.C. is invaluable for providing bibliographic information. Hence an E.R.I.C. search was made to ascertain the extent of the bibliography for multicultural education. This is an urgent issue for teacher preparation institutions (Jordan Irvine 1991).

There were 4,000 articles found overall. However, for the years 1994 through 1996 the universities held only 920.. Most of these journals at the regional universities were primarily for the field of teacher education. For example the library has an array of "Childhood Education", "Educational Leadership", "Journal of General Education", and "Reading Teacher." What is the message being given here?

It has been documented from time immemorial that most people learn best through active participation and the use of tactile and visual aids. To this end, most schools, colleges, and universities make excellent efforts to provide videos, learning kits, pictures and cassette tapes for their stakeholders. These universities and colleges are no exception. Among the multicultural objects are a set of Dance Bells, and two Tarahumara Indian Drums. Also in the collection of multicultural education materials are two kits – one called Many Voices: A Multicultural Literature – and four pictures including one called "Children of the World" There are two videos and one "Children of the World Puzzle." These items were published between 1981 and 1996 and can be found in Learning Resource Libraries. Are these sufficient for the use of professors who address cultural diversity in their classes? One of the investigators teaches a class on Racism and Sexism in Educational Institutions. The other includes the topic in her Elementary Education Classroom Management course. With regard to relevance and appropriateness of the resources, what is the report of students who are assigned multicultural projects?

To respond to the last question 162 teacher education majors were surveyed. These students were enrolled in Classroom Management Courses. A distinctive feature of the investigation was that it was largely qualitative. The students were asked to prepare their projects in addition to submitting a report on the availability of supporting material. All the participants reported that:

1. they could not find adequate multicultural resources at these schools.
2. the materials were not relevant – in most cases – to the tasks.
3. the scant materials were inappropriate.

Of the 162 students surveyed, 20 were minorities.

A review of the questions posed in this article along with the experiences of the authors have resulted in the conclusions that follow. The regional universities do not possess resources on multicultural education that are appropriate to prepare its stakeholders to examine this topic. The materials and books in the university/college libraries, including the main libraries and the resourse rooms, are not relevant to the needs of faculty, staff, and students to become prepared for existence in a multicultural world.

Literature and artifacts comprise part of the definition of "culture". The students are getting a message from the library holdings of these centers of higher learning that people of color are not an integral part of the institutions' culture.

Concerted Efforts to Empower Minorities to Impact the Established Culture of the Institution and to Create a New Environment

Institutions of higher education have been in existence for many years. Few institutions of higher education have been in existence for less than ten years. During the period of establishing goals and setting governance parameters, minority perspectives were not represented on such structures nor was much thought given to how the presence of minority populations might impact the learning environment. As a result, minority students find themselves not only having to adapt to the rigors of academia, but, also, having to penetrate the aspects of institutional cultures which, in most instances, are very foreign to people of color.

It is apparent that the past attempts to recruit and retain minority students in institutions of higher education were made for the right purpose but generated for the wrong reasons. In most cases, serious efforts were initiated as a result of accreditation mandates. This meant that little, if any, preparation was made on the part of the colleges and universities to prepare faculty, staff, and students for the automatic changes that multicultural environments require. In view of this fact, quick and instantaneous measures were put in place without giving appropriate consideration to the enculturation process that is necessary. Again, the purpose of minority recruitment and retention is viable but the means by which they have been initiated and maintained doom the results and preclude success.

Successful recruitment and retention of minority students in institutions of higher education have not been sustained because there is limited understanding and a lack of wisdom to know how all participants stand to benefit when they live, grow, and study in an environment that is shaped by the contributions of diverse

populations, This means, however, that all participants must feel a sense of connectedness to the institution and have a feeling of identity with the values, beliefs, attitudes, rules and regulations which they are expected to embrace.

To bring about this paradigm shift requires rethinking the purpose of higher education. Institutions of higher education should be assessed on their ability to graduate persons equipped to live in the real world and model the behavior that is required for meeting the needs of society as we approach the twenty-first century. Structures need to be designed that provide cohort groups, comprised of different ethnic and racial populations, individuals who elect to be educated in a multicultural environment. In this way the values, beliefs, rules and regulations of the institution would be reviewed regularly by those groups impacted by the culture of the institution, thereby bringing into existence a new culture in which all members of the group could share.

Empowerment comes when persons who are affected by change have the opportunity to impact that change. In this instance that means that minority students would choose to be in a cohort group with representatives of other persons like themselves and would be empowered to help produce an environment that emanates receptivity and appreciation for diversity. When minority students connect with the environment and the atmosphere, there is an automatic retention power that can never be generated by edict nor simply through participation in cultural activities. When minority students intuit relational commraderie on the part of their peers, the administrators, faculty and staff there is a natural desire for them to contribute to the effort being put forth. When minority students sense the enthusiasm that emanates from creativity and the parameters of change there is a magnetic field generated that encaptures them, gives direction, and causes them to trust those who are in authority.

Adequate Preparation of the Faculty, Staff, and Students to Live in a Multicultural Society

The phenomena of change require that all persons affected by the change must move from the status quo and bring into existence new realities that all participants must adopt. In a generic sense this is needed. More specifically applied to the area of minority recruitment and retention means that faculty, staff, and students in the majority population must be expected to make some adaptations in the way they treat and work with people of color.

To learn the culture, beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors of diverse groups requires effort on the part of faculty to be exposed to such experiences. It stands to reason that many faculty members live in communities that are underrepresented with people of color and , therefore, there is limited opportunity for faculty to experience the culture of others unlike themselves. Although it may be difficult to change this phenomenon , the universities can offer vicarious and planned experiences for faculty by:

- planning weekend retreats where diversity is the subject and object of focus
- providing faculty development opportunities in which planned dialog with minorities is made available to those who desire to enrich their experiences
- sponsoring bus tours through diverse communities with a guide knowledgeable in cultural diversity and a history of the dynamics of change
- establishing host homes for cultural luncheons
- holding lunch seminars focused on multicultural education
- designing work sessions to review course offerings and their focus on multicultural education

- attending cultural events such as plays, concerts, song fests and holding discussion groups based on the events

- developing a bibliography of recommended readings for faculty

These are just a few ways in which faculty should participate in activities which may differ from their regular experiences.

Opportunities to Experience the Enrichment Resulting From a Culturally Pluralistic Community

The peoples in America have lived with attitudes of separatism and super-ego since the founding of this country. These attitudes, over time, have had to change and grow. Looking back over history it is apparent that America came into existence through the contributions of the Native Americans, Africans, Europeans, Asians and Hispanics. From the beginning, diversity was a part of this society. To act as though this diversity does not exist is to deny racial and ethnic groups their identity.

No one racial or ethnic group can individually claim ownership to all that is ascribed to be American. This means that each group has only a piece of the pie and that it takes all groups to constitute the whole of society.

Why then has it been important for the people of America to outgrow the once held view that America is a "melting-pot"? A melting pot denies survival of individual cultures. Understandably so, the melting pot concept brought into existence a feeling of nationalism toward the making of a new nation. When this allegiance had been accomplished the next stage was determined to be a "salad-bowl". The salad bowl allowed for distinctness and individuality but did not build the need for working together across racial, ethnic, and cultural lines and/or barriers and increasing knowledge about differences.

The most recent analogy is that America is a tapestry that requires the work and contributions of all its people because no one group has the ability, skills, or attributes to comprehend the beauty of diversity. Therefore, all students can be enriched by the culture that others bring and can find something in their own culture to make the tapestry of America a beautiful product.

One of the benefits in being in a pluralistic society is that people have the opportunity to eradicate unwholesome prejudices and reduce damaging biases. Academia provides an excellent arena for engendering and nurturing the attitudes, skills, and behaviors needed for multicultural living. Without the acquisition of these attitudes, skills, and behaviors, education has not occurred that will prepare citizens for meaningful relationships in the world of today and tomorrow.

Summary:

The recruitment and retention of minorities in institutions of higher education must be founded upon principles of inclusiveness that show a real desire to embrace cultural diversity. All persons involved must be expected to make changes and adaptations to the ways in which students of color are inducted into the foreign environments of colleges and universities. First generation college students face many of the same problems. But students of color, simply because of the color of their skin, are made to endure beyond what should be expected.

Recommendations:

DEPARTMENTS/SCHOOLS OF EDUCATION:

1. Provide an opportunity for representatives from the various departments at the universities, who offer courses in ethnic studies, to collaborate on an ethnic studies program. This would lead to a major, minor or cognate focus in the teacher education preparation program.

2. Analyze the library holdings in multicultural education for relevance and appropriateness to insure that the resources are current.

3. For the next biennium increase the line item in the budget for procuring multicultural audio-visual materials.

4. Create a pool of minorities using the universities' web pages as one of the means for attracting potential employees for leadership positions.

5. Provide an opportunity for teacher education students to elect to enroll in a cohort group established specifically to focus on multicultural education. This should be available to all students on an optional basis, initially, but required ultimately.

6. Provide multicultural education training for all new employees in the Schools of Education. In addition, design and implement ongoing activities for faculty and staff.

7. Insure that adequate minority representation is reflected in all major decision making activities of the Schools/ Departments of Education.

THE UNIVERSITIES/COLLEGES IN GENERAL

1. Analyze the library holdings in multicultural education for relevance and appropriateness to insure that the resources are current.

2. Increase the line item in the budget for procuring multicultural audio-visual materials.

3. Create a pool of minorities using the university web page as one of the means for attracting potential employees for leadership positions.

4. Identify students and employees within the institution and groom them for leadership positions.

5. Establish a leadership development training program for minorities using, among others, the technique of "shadowing".

6. Provide an opportunity for all students to elect to enroll in, at least, six semester hours (cohort group) in multicultural education. This should be available on an optional basis, initially, but required ultimately.

7. Provide multicultural education training for all new employees as part of their orientation to the University/College. In addition, design and implement ongoing activities in multicultural education for faculty and staff.

8. Insure that adequate minority representation is reflected on all governing entities of the Unversity.

9. Subsidize on-campus Residence Hall expenses for members of cohort groups to voluntarily "live in multicultural settings". Oversee the experience to insure immersion into cross-cultural practices.

Epilogue

Multiculturalism is a way of life which empowers all who share it. Each ethnic group in any community, especially academia, must be understood, embraced, and properly celebrated by educators. No ethnic minorities should be expected or encouraged to reject the culture of their own group in order to assimilate into the culture of the majority group. No minority should be forced to weather the storms of higher academic achievement in isolation. Minorities (students, faculty and staff) need to be bouyed to obtain social legitimacy. They must be empowered to impact their university so that the shared culture is truly the culture of all stakeholders. It can be done.

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